decomposed remains of calcareous animals, chiefly polypes, and rarely exhibiting specimens of organic remains. Sometimes, in forming, it passes through several stages of change, as sulphate and common chalk; it is allied to gypsum, almost always indeed being found in contact with it, and the latter very often passes into it. The Marsigli marble is rather an alabaster than a marble. Alabaster may be distinguished as belonging to the older and newer formations, but the terms primary and secondary, when applied to this material, only tend to divert the mind from the real object of pursuit, which is to discover its origin, qualities, and the varying purposes to which it may be adapted. The hills of Egypt, in which the catacombs are disposed, might reasonably be classed under the head of alabaster formations, and there is no doubt, that were these soft calcareous beds disposed beneath a more humid climate, that they would pass into this state. In these hills all traces of animal organization are slowly disappearing before the changing hand of Time; and in some strata the change is so exceedingly slow that although thousands of years have elapsed, the mineralogical observer will not fail to observe that they are still in the infancy of progress.

Gypsous alabaster is distinguished by not effervescing in nitrous acid; it loses its transparency, its lustre, and solidity, when exposed to fire, and changes into plaster of Paris. It is so soft, as to be marked with the nail, and takes an indifferently fine polish; the most valuable variety is sensibly transparent, milk-white in colour. Many of our finest monuments, and a vast variety of statuary work are of alabaster, chiefly brought from Italy, and often wrought in that country. The alabaster of the department of Mont Blanc is of the most beautiful white, sometimes veined with grey, and receiving an exquisite polish.

Anhydrous alabaster is of several colours, white, rose, grey, and even blue, which is called celestine; the white is also found at Vizil, near Grenoble, and was used by the Romans, as appears by the column at Thim, on the banks of the Rhone, erected in the time of Aurelian. Mixed with a considerable quantity of silex, it forms the *bardiglio* of the Italians, found near Vulpino, fifteen leagues from Milan, and employed in making columns, tables, and vases. There is also white alabaster from Derbyshire; with a blue transparency from Nottingham; yellowish white alabaster from Laguy, about twenty miles from Paris, translucent and full of little cracks, used for columns and vases; bright grey alabaster, with green and yellowish spots, from Taormini, in Sicily, another remarkable spot for a variety of marbles and serpentines; translucent alabaster, of a bright yellow, waved with white, from the Isle of Goyzan, near Malta; Anydrous alabaster from Grenoble, &c. &c.

(*To be continued.*)

## PIMLICO SLATE WORKS.

We have been highly gratified this week by an inspection of the slate works exhibited in the show-rooms of Magnus and Company, at Pimlico. Slate, except as a material for coverings, and manufacturing writing-tablets, is but of recent introduction into London, and though during the last few years it has been occasionally, and in some instances extensively, employed in flooring warehouses and forming cisterns, the extent of its applicability is little known, and its most valuable properties still remain unfamiliar to the public at large. *Strength* far beyond that of the best Yorkshire stone, amazing *durability* and cleanliness surpassing that of most other material, are qualities that must recommend it to every person having a regard to comfort or economy, whilst its cool and non-absorbent nature renders it eminently suitable for shelves and tables in the larder, dairy, and other receptacles for food; for skirtings it is also particularly well-adapted. There are great varieties of slate: in some places it is found in thick laminæ or flakes, and it differs in its qualities and colours. White, brown, and blue are the common colours; that under consideration is distinguished from all others by its beautiful *ebon-like* appearance, and its freedom from green spots or stains of any kind; it is produced from the proprietors' own quarries in North Wales. It is impossible to withhold the tribute of admiration when we behold the improvements made in the manufacture of the different objects which constitute the splendid show at Pimlico. Enamels, hitherto confined to plates of metal, are now painted on slate with beautiful effect; the colours are vivid and permanent: the aid of fire, so essential to the method of painting in enamel, is also used; indeed, the intensity of the heat in various stages of the process is so great, that the slate is rendered superior to marble. Among numerous specimens that attracted our attention was a mosaic table recently completed for Colonel Dawkins Pennant, the owner of a Welsh quarry, a billiard-table made similar to one supplied to the Duke of Wellington a short time since, some splendid imitations of mosaic pavements, chimney-pieces of the most costly description, with exquisite paintings burnt in, similar to those of the finest china or papier maché, and enriched with sculptured slate caps, paterns, &c.; some highly ornamented loo and work-tables, together with several vases and flower-pots on plinths, columns, &c.

## TUPPER'S PATENT "SAOTAPE NOSING," OR "CARPET-GUARD" FOR STAIRS AND STEPS.

The annexed wood-cut, fig. 1, represents a flight of stairs altered to this new patented method of laying down carpets, &c., and of ornamenting stairs, and it is a drawing of a full-sized model at present deposited at the Polytechnic Institution.

The chief peculiarities of this patent consist in the prevention of carpet or oil-cloth from wearing out at the edge of the stairs or steps, which is very perceptible in all houses; it also occasions the use of less of the fabric put down, as there is a saving of from 1 to 2 inches upon every step, and this fact is shewn in fig. 3, which is a section of two stairs, the upper one exhibiting Mr. Tupper's principle, the other being upon the old method. It will be seen that the carpet or other covering will be preserved upon the former, whilst upon the lower step it would be submitted to the action of the feet, and in that way would soon wear out.

In addition to these economical features, it also possesses that of preventing the stretching of the carpets by which the stair-rods are so frequently displaced by getting out of the "eyes." This invention is also intended to be in those houses in which the proprietors will not go to the expense of new nosings, applied by cutting through the tread obliquely close to the nosing, as shew in fig. 3; in the slit so made the carpe is passed tightly down, in contact with the wood-work of the stair *everywhere*, presenting no edges for wear and tear, being protected by the nosing, which may be left either plain or painted wood, or covered.

The nosings may be altogether separate from the stairs, and the method of fixing them is very simple, and is effected by wrought-iron studs and plates; they may also be secured by screws, hinges, &c., they being made of various woods and metals, and can be ornamented to any extent or pattern, either by carving or by casting, so that the staircase is intended by this invention to coincide with the architecture and appointments of the house. In the large model, the nosings are of carved oak and walnut, and the effect is both neat and decorative.

In these moveable nosings, two or more "stays" are so placed, that when the nosing is applied and is fixed, to the *riser* of the stair, these stays clamp the carpet securely, obviating the use of stair-rods and eyes. This patent is intended to be applicable to all stairs, whether of wood or stone; and in large houses, where support *might* be required, the stair-rod is proposed to be made of an arch-like form, as shewn in fig 2.

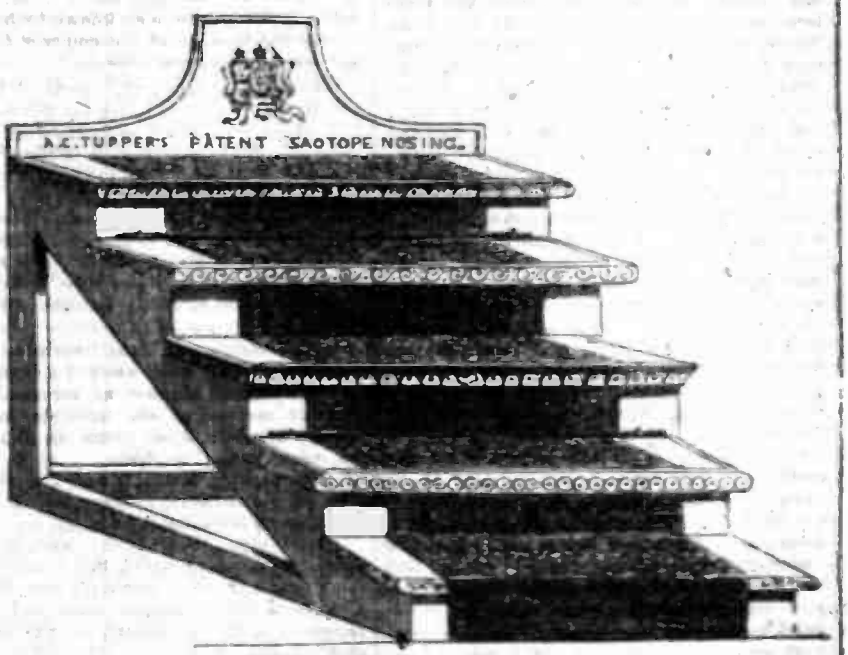


*Fig.* 1.

*Fig.* 2.

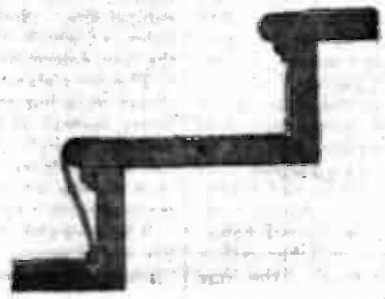

*Fig.* 3.

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